

9. A lithographic device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the substrate holders each comprise a basic part which is guided over the guiding surface and can be coupled to the displacement units, and a substrate table which is displaceable relative to the basic part by means of an actuator unit of the relevant substrate holder.

10. A lithographic device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the substrate table of each of the substrate holders is displaceable relative to the basic part parallel to the X-direction, parallel to the Y-direction, and parallel to a Z-direction extending perpendicularly to the X-direction and the Y-direction, and is pivotable relative to the basic part about a first pivot axis extending parallel to the X-direction, a second pivot axis extending parallel to the Y-direction, and a third pivot axis extending parallel to the Z-direction.

11. A positioning device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said first and second object holders are first and second substrate holders, respectively.--

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application, claims 7-11 being newly added herewith.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's acknowledgement of receipt of a certified copy of the European Application. The Examiner indicated that a claim for priority to obtain the benefits of the foreign filing should be made and referred to on the declaration. Applicants have submitted a substitute declaration attached to this amendment which includes a claim for priority to the PCT and original European applications.

Applicants have submitted a substitute Abstract with this Amendment to comply with the formal requirements.

The Examiner rejected claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner indicated that claim 6 claims a lithographic device, but depends from claim 1 which claims a positioning device. Applicants have rewritten claim 6 in independent form directed to a lithographic device. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is now definite and request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fickenscher (U.S. Patent No. 3,679,874). Applicants respectfully traverse for the following reasons. Claim 1 is directed to a positioning device. On the other hand, Fickenscher describes a transporting device for transporting luggage along a one-dimensional, curved path. Carts are transported along a track, rail or cable, which is completely different from features recited in claim 1, for example, the first and second object holders.

In contrast to Fickenschier, claim 1 is directed to a positioning device for a lithographic apparatus. Applicants have amended the preamble of claim 1 to clarify this. Fickenschier does not disclose any of the recited features appropriate for a lithographic apparatus, e.g., a first object holder, a second object holder, and a displacement system. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is now in condition for allowance. Applicants thus respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Akimoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,027,262) and rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Loopstra et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,969,441). Akimoto has a U.S. filing date of August 29, 1997. The priority date of the current Application, as now properly claimed, is March 10, 1997. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Akimoto is not a prior art reference. Similarly, Loopstra et al has a U.S. filing date of October 10, 1997, whereas the priority date of the current Application is March 10, 1997. Therefore, Loopstra et al is not prior art now that a proper claim for priority has been made. Applicants thus respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on Akimoto and Loopstra et al be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akimoto in view of Lin (U.S. Patent No. 5,715,064). Applicants respectfully traverse for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that Akimoto is not a prior art reference since Applicants have now properly claimed priority with a priority date of March 10, 1997.

Furthermore, Lin neither teaches nor suggests all of the features recited in independent claims 1 and 6. For example, claim 1 recites

“a first displacement unit being suitable for displacing the object holders from the first position into an intermediate position between the first and second position, and the second displacement unit being suitable for displacing the object holders from the intermediate position into the second position.”

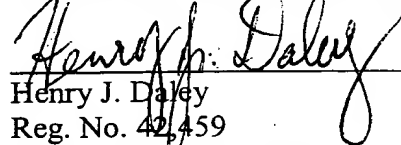
Claim 6 recites a similar feature, but with respect to first and second substrate holders. Lin neither teaches nor suggests at least this aspect of Applicants' invention. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2 and 6 are in condition for allowance, and request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants added new claims 7, 8, 9 and 10 which are similar to claims 2, 3, 4 and 5, but depend from base claim 6. New claim 11 depends from claim 1, but further defines the object holders as substrate holders.

Applicants have addressed all of the Examiner's objections and rejections and respectfully submit that the Application is in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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